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BOMBAY BRANCH

OF THE

Royal Asiatic Society.

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Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

ON

Free-Masonry:

BY A

MASONIC BROTHER,

BOWMANJEE CURSETJEE C.

BANDOOPWALLA.

93815

AMROLEE CASTLE,

Bombay:

1876.

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THIS BOOK

ON

FREE-MASONRY

is most respectfully dedicated to

THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL BROTHER

THE HON'BLE J. GIBBS,

D.G.M., E.C.,

By his devoted Servant,

BOWMANJEE CURSETJEE COWASJEE

BANDOOPWALLA.

PREFACE.

In attempting to produce this little book before the public, I do not mean to indulge in idle bickerings, but to expose an evil that ought never to exist, and ought to be checked and cast out from among us—assured as I am that what I state will meet with the approbation of the Fraternity.

BOWMANJEE CURSETJEE C.

Bandoopwalla.

FREE-MASONRY.

O, Shib-bo-leth! Where thy brotherly love?
O, Gib-lum! Where thy excellence?
O, Le-wis! Where thy strength?

Ought ye not three
United in one ever be,
By the tie of Fraternity?

FREE-MASONRY.

SUBJECT.

Chap. I.

Bro. Masons, beware the GRIP—the heart spring!

FREE-MASONRY is a Society founded by a body of people of every class, caste, and creed, united under a mystic tie of brotherhood, to maintain each other's interests, and to work mutually together to attain that height of perfection which God in His wisdom has destined for man.

It is founded upon the principles of fellowship, love, and duty;

to promote one another's welfare in life, as brethren united in one particular cause, and linked by one particular tie.

By this tie they are taught to know one another, and vowed to respect one another's interests.

This being the principle on which Free-masonry is founded, what a flagrant breach of compact, injurious to the reputation of that Society, would it not be to witness the coolness which now pervades the circle of Masons! One might justly exclaim—Alas!

How good a principle, but—
How bad those who profess it!

FREE-MASONRY.

Chap. II.

"Thine, Freedom, thine the blessings pictur'd here,
Thine are those charms that dazzle and endear,
Too blest, indeed, were such without alloy.
Alas—foster'd by Freedom, o'en ills annoy!"

From a feeling devoted to those I love and respect, I pursue my labour in producing this little book. How far my brethren willbepleased or displeased with my observations, I do not pretend to enquire, but I know they will *in* a measure object to them. To this I can only say that what I have written is the result of a close observation during the five years that I have been a

member of the Free-mason Society to be certain of what I allege; and that, not only from my own personal experience and pursuits, but also combined with what I have gathered from other source and from information, has led me on to the discoveries I display. Most certain it is, that every subject acquires an adventitious importance to him who considers it closely; that he finds it more intimately connected with human happiness than the rest of his fellows are apt to think or allow; that he sees consequences resulting from it which do not strike others with equal conviction.

Thus, when intellectual pleasures are disagreeable, those of the sense take the lead, and we feel an ambition of being foremost at a cause in which justice, propriety, and duty demand attention.

Such accounts as these, I must confess, were my first motives when I thought of publishing this little book, and it was these that induced me to undertake to write upon the subject, though difficult to comment upon, and painful to my feelings, who am a member of that Society. But I cannot pacify the stern law of duty which so forcibly spurs me onwards.

FREE-MASONRY.

Chap. III.

Determin'd to let my brethren know,
Nothing difficult, of perception here below,
Exists within the sphere of mankind—
Which perseverance shall not find!

Like one of those more aspiring than the rest, I have undertaken to devote my time and labour towards accomplishing a task which has, hitherto, never been considered by any one of my brethren worthy of being undertaken; and perhaps I may be applauded by some for my intrepidity, if it

may be so termed, and censured by many for the attempt. But still, undaunted and determined, I shall pursue the task with the same ardour with which I have begun, feeling that the desire to be useful is what actually makes one so, and none but the ignorant will inveigh against it.

The sense of duty I owe my fellow-creatures and brethren, shall be my guide—and unblemished merit shall be my reward at the end—in a matter which I am prompted to bring forward thus boldly, even though I should waive my fraternal authority in doing so.

Thus have I pursued, with a weary mind,
To bring to light the ways of mankind,
Pressed on by duty to join this laborious train,
Wherein social peace loses all its pain.
My anxious bard, without complaint, shall share
This wearisome toil wrought with all care:
Unconscious of praise, if praise be due,
I trust without fear, to merit so true.

FREE-MASONRY.

Chap. IV.

Gladly would I lead thee
To prospects of peace and unity,
Where every breeze breathes love,
And every sound echoes brother-hood.

Goaded by a stern impulse of duty to myself, and to my fellow-brethren, and by an irresistible desire to do justice to that Society of which I am a member, I have ventured upon this task. If I succumbed to the glaring impropriety of an act which my conscience bids me to be wrong, I might justly be censured, and

thought vastly low, both in the estimation of my brethren and the public. In short, whichever way I turned my mind to consider this most painful topic, I found the inclination to bring it forward more forcible. They who, like me, can place themselves on that side of the scene in which every thing appears in a clear light, will undoubtedly agree with me.

In former times, when Freemasonry was in its tender age, the warmth of love and duty was displayed with much greater zeal than at present—confined as it was within a limited sphere—a certain race of people only; but

now, when it is growing universal, the more it is developed, the fewer are the indications of that warmth. And, indeed, it is a well-known deplorable fact that Free-masons now-a-days too frequently fall out, and make a dreadful breach of their compact of *unity and brotherly love*, and their acts resemble more like *mock-masons* rising up rather to prevent Masonic principles than build up that righteous cause. There are some men, who, in their gardens, attempt to raise those fruits which are indigenous to sultry climates. We have at our very doors a genial Society infinitely sublime and

useful if properly cultivated, and prudentially controlled. These are the fruits we should endeavour to cultivate—these the exotics that will speedily become naturalized. They might grow in every climate, and benefit every possessor—and are the true essence of Free-masonry. Let them be freely eaten and digested in us, that they may bring forth the happy harvest of a new life among us, and make us a regenerated people united in the bond of concord.

FREE-MASONRY.

Chap. V.

Let Faith, Hope, and Charity
Be followed with due sincerity!

There is nothing in which Free-masons should take a greater pleasure than in the performance of those duties which form the basis of the Masonic principles.

Fellowship and love are duties among Masons as indispensably necessary as those imposed by law; and I appeal to them, if, in my remarks, I have in any wise differed from the views of others. It is the duty of man to persevere in

bringing a thing to rights by exploring facts, though in doing so he might be bringing danger upon himself. If he be only successful in securing the just cause for the welfare and interest of a body of people he loves and respects, the sacrifice will be worthy of him—as the way to secure lasting esteem is to spare no endeavours in checking an evil ere it grows to be a monstrous scourge. Were any of those ancient Masons among us—any of those liberal-minded men, I say, who were for exploring Freemasonry, and taking antiquity as a precedence—they would

readily chalk out a promising path for the modern times, and boldly forward my design in the task I have undertaken, that the same desire which has made men Masons may tend to make them good also—loving and social—and worthy members of that Society. What good could not such qualities united produce? But it is much to be lamented that such is not the warmth of the present age, and hence the discord that so frequently arises among Masons.

FREE-MASONRY.

Chap. VI.

"Turn, gentle Hermit of the dale,
And guide my lonely way,
To where yon taper cheers the vale
With hospitable ray.

"For here, forlorn and lost, I tread
With fainting steps and slow,
Where wilds, immeasurably spread,
Seem length'ning as I go."

Complaints of our degeneracy, I own, have been frequently made, but seem to be enforced more with the ardour of devious declamation, than the calmness of deliberate enquiry. The manner of being useful to a Society would be, to point out the wrongs,

to investigate the causes, and discover the remedies of the approaching evil. This method has been hitherto unattempted in criticism, and perhaps it is the only method in which criticism can be made most useful.

It should be considered, that man is naturally so much of a logician as to distinguish right from wrong, what is plain and easy from what is hard and inconceivable. What we understand, we overlook and despise; and what we know nothing of, we hug and delight in. Thus there are such things as perpetual novelties; for we are pleas-

ed no longer than we are amazed, and nothing so much contents us as that which confounds us. It is not to nature, however, but to ourselves alone, that this peculiarity must be ascribed : the seeds of excellence are sown in every age, but it is wholly owing to a wrong direction in the passions and pursuits of mankind, that they have not received the proper cultivation, and thus it often happens that, in the very best societies, we find men of very worst morals. So with Freemasonry ; as it is becoming more and more diffused in the world we inhabit, and as the candidates

of every colour and creed become more and more numerous, the acquisition of fame for their well-being and prosperity in like manner becomes the more relaxed and uncertain, a general disagreement, arising from discontentment, being the common cause! To illustrate these assertions, however, it will be proper to take a slight view of the decline of modern Free-masons. Alas! How many have resigned and left their work undone. To consider how far the impropriety of their conduct, is to see into the impossibility of supporting continued perfection in which respect

it failed from voluntary corruption, to fall into disunion. If modern Free-masonry be compared with the ancient in these different lights, we shall find a terrible contrast, a vast contrariety between both, which has hitherto produced volumes of dispute, and, it is to be hoped, may yet contribute to instruct and guide us into the right path of Free-masonry. We shall from this be enabled to perceive to *what* period of antiquity modern Masonry has arrived, and the present age most resembles; whether we are making advances towards excellence, or retiring into primeval obscurity.

FREE-MASONRY.

Chap. VII.

On Initiation in India.

Ancient Times.

Brethren, those mysteries you'll try with closer eyes,
And trace them through the prospect as it lies.

The mysteries of India, as derived from ancient history, formed one of the earliest corruptions of the pure science, now denoted Free-masonry.

At that time all Royal personages were mostly Free-masons. And, indeed, it is for nobles and

dignitaries more than the ordinary class of people to be Masons, and have the principles of charity and good-will exemplified.

A brief description of the caverns of Elephanta and Salsette, both situated near Bombay, will afford a competent idea of secret celebrations which abounded at that time in the vast continent of ancient India. These stupendous edifices, carved out of solid rock, with statues of every description, are of doubtful origin.

The cavern of Elephanta is the most ancient temple in the world framed by the art of man ; it is

one hundred and thirty-five feet square, and eighteen feet high, supported by massive pillars, and its walls are covered on all sides with statues, and carved emblematical decorations—some of the figures having on their heads a kind of helmet of a pyramidal form, others wearing crowns rich in devices. Many of them have four hands, many have six, and in those hands they grasp sceptres and shields,—the symbols of justice and ensigns of religion, the weapons of war and the trophies of peace.

The caverns of Salsette, excavated in a rock whose external

form is pyramidal, and situated in the bosom of an extensive and fearful wood, infested by enormous serpents and ravenous beasts, very greatly exceed in magnitude those of Elephanta; being in number three hundred, all adorned with an abundance of carved and emblematic characters. The largest cavern is eighty-four feet long, forty-six broad, and forty high, full of cavities on all sides, placed at convenient distances for the arrangement of the dreadful apparatus of initiation, so constructed as to overwhelm the unconscious aspirant with horror and

superstitious dread. The different ranges of apartments were connected by open galleries, and the most secret caverns which contained the ineffable symbols were accessible only by private entrances curiously contrived to give greater effect to certain points in the ceremonies of initiation, and a cubical cista for the periodical sepulture of the aspirant was placed in the inmost recesses of the structure. The periods of initiation were regulated by the increase of the moon, and the mysteries were divided into four steps or degrees, called Char Asherum, which were

equally the dispensers of perfection.

The candidate might perform his first probation at the early age of twelve years. It consisted of an investiture with the Zennar, or sacred cord of three threads, which was explained to refer to three elements—earth, fire, and air—the principal object of which related to the unity and trinity of the godhead. He was then clothed in a linen garment without seam, a cord put over his right ear as a medium of purification, and he was placed under the exclusive care of a Brahmin, who was thence termed his spiri-

tual guide, to be instructed in the necessary qualifications for the second degree.

When he had attained the specific age, if he was found on examination to have made due progress in the mythological lore of the first degree, he was admitted to enter on the probationary ceremonies for the second, which was called Gerishth. His probation being at length completed, he was admitted by initiation to take part in the privileges which the mysteries were believed to confer.

The foregoing tends in a great measure to shew that Free-

masonry comes down from very ancient times, though it was then differently practised ; that it has originated from the heathens ; and that, as it came down among the Christian nations, it gradually improved, and spread far and wide.

The Christian reader may start to behold the sign of the Cross— the sacred emblem of his faith— used as a symbol of heathen devotion ; but it is even so. The Holy Cross, pointed to the four quarters of the compass, was honored as a striking emblem of the universe by many ancient nations. It is found engraven

on their monuments, and even the erection of many of their temples was conducted on the same cruciform principle.

Had the heathen nobles of the present age not been quite so destitute as they are of this principle of Free-masonry, they would have undoubtedly been more popular and much better disposed towards their fellow-creatures.

Here for awhile my cares are resigned,
Here I pause to meditate for mankind—
Like one astounded and at random cast,
My thoughts in deep obscurities are tossed.

FREE-MASONRY.

Chap. VIII.

Could my feeble pen, with ideas so faint,
Upon a topic so shameful comment ?

It is to be observed that some of the most admired Masons had copied nature to great perfection, and from her they had collected many very useful discoveries, which were afterwards improved and introduced into Free-masonry for observance as our best guides. Common-sense would suggest that these might be studied to greater advantage than the practice of imitation now commonly observed in

the Masonic Lodges. Those rules of imitation were collected *not from nature*, but a copy of nature, and brought into practice, and consequently could give but a faint resemblance of original beauty.

But what shall we say of those rules they have at present, when we see the brethren jest and laugh in the Lodge at the very time of the ceremony! In fact, there is no rule whatever *that is observed*, and the brethren seldom attend the Lodge save on occasions of a banquet or ball; and with such deplorable altercations among them, there is no possibility

of maintaining order in a Lodge, where every member has a right to respect, and duty to observe. But, alas! our Masonic Lodge seems more like a theatre, and all the members like actors in it, each one acting his own part as it seems best to him, and the Worshipful Master at the head of the whole sits quiet and astounded.

Such a mode of proceeding in a Lodge certainly shews a perfect mockery, and such members as these are undoubtedly a perfect disgrace to the Free-mason Society.

FREE-MASONRY.

Chap. IX.

Happy *that* man who makes truth his guide,
Nor wealth, nor force, could turn his steps aside
Unaw'd by power, and unappall'd by fear,
With honest thrift holds his honor dear!

Lest it should be supposed that I am willing to correct in others a fault of which I am equally guilty as a member of the same Society, I beg leave to declare that I never, in any one instance, gave way to or allowed myself to be led away by such erroneous and destructive principles as have hitherto been follow-

ed by my brethren, and of all which I have been an eye-witness; and, indeed, I have loathed it to a degree that I can no longer avoid the inclination of making it public —not with a desire of inflicting injury, but with a sincere wish to do every possible good, in which I pray God to help me!

There is a wisdom in Freemasonry which few brethren among us yet understand. The simple understanding that we have entered upon a sacred office and are initiated into a sacred duty, does not imply or reveal this: to throw a light upon this obscurity is to shew that in this mystic

field, where the harvest is so great, unhappily the labourers are but few! *(i.e., few good)*. Yes, the labourers are indeed few —few are to be found among us endowed with that warmth of zeal which would become Masons. And why so? Because the divisions and distinctions among us do not give that particular fame. To know Masonry properly is to practise it freely. Free in heart—Free in zeal—Free in warmth. Thus united, all distinctions are expelled, and we become indeed as one people, one body, one altogether. Beautiful, mindful, powerful, in one glorious cause.

This is the chief essence of Freemasonry; and from this is derived every other idea, operating and co-operating in one and the same cause. When the mind is inculcated with the rich gifts this bestows, it will undoubtedly receive the proper nurture, and find pleasure in what contributes to increase knowledge in this particular; but unless it so inclines itself, nothing beneficial can possibly be derived from the discoveries hitherto made in Freemasonry.

FREE-MASONRY.

Chap. X.

Though humble in wit, still firm,
Constant in desire and stern.
Let me persevere as I have begun,
Tho' tedious a task to my feeble pen.
Hope shall encourage me onward,
And Duty shall be my reward.

The main principles in Free-masonry, as already shewn, are charity and good-will among the brethren. But the question is—does this really exist among them at present? The most appropriate reply that one could give under the circumstances would, of course, be in the negative.

Not unfrequently the most shameful stratagems are practised by the brethren to evade a brother's request, in cases where help is sought. Could we think ourselves members of a Society of civilized Masons? Could it be conceived that the brethren have any regard for that Society, when such unnatural coolness is shewn among them?

This cruel demeanour has often been the cause of disgrace and ruin to many a worthy Mason, who has been led from misfortune and hopelessness of condition to commit suicide, and other crimes terminating in a premature death.

Because a man is poor *is no reason* that he should be shunned and hated ; surely, honest poverty can never so degrade a man as to lower him in the estimation of his brethren, though his unfortunate situation certainly places him entirely at the mercy of his fellows : but mean indeed is *that man* who dares to take any unmanly advantage in his fallen situation. Yet there are some who actually take a delight in his poverty,and persecute the innocent and helpless! Such, indeed, is the mean nature of some men !—and with such men abounds this ungrateful world at the present

time. We see nothing in it but vice and cruelty practised daily, even among the most enlightened Masons; and with such principles opposed, it is hard —*indeed, very hard*—to pull on fraternally.

The most excellent principle is that which contributes to improve the morals—which lays down the distinct line of duties we owe one another, as brethren united in one mystic tie. But for this our Society can never, in any way, be considered universally *free and accepted* among the body of Masons.

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